



**Dear Friend:**

As the first year of the 109th Congress draws to a close, I want to update you on some of the work I have been doing on challenges we confront at home and abroad.

Our young men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to put their lives on the line every day. I join with all Americans in offering our condolences to the families and friends of the thousands who have been killed or injured. While I opposed President Bush's decision to invade Iraq, I will continue to do everything possible to provide our troops with the equipment and support they need. I also believe that we should adopt the plan to bring our troops home advanced by Senator Carl Levin and the Senate Democrats in their proposed amendment to the Defense Authorization Bill.

In light of the abuses that have taken place at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, we must work to restore our moral standing in the world. Historically, America has stood as a shining beacon of hope and human rights for people around the globe. That beacon has dimmed as our actions have not always matched our principles. While we must maintain a strong national defense, we must lead not just by the might of our military, but by the power of our ideas and the force of our example.

As we restore our credibility around the world, we must also get our priorities straight here at home. We should not be cutting college assistance for students in order to extend another \$70 billion in tax cuts that primarily benefit the super wealthy. It is wrong to pay for Katrina relief efforts by cutting health care support to the most vulnerable among us. We must insist on shared sacrifice to meet our common objectives. At a time when oil and gas companies are making record profits, it is irresponsible for the Congress to add more red ink to the national debt by providing large taxpayer subsidies for that industry. We must put an end to those wasteful corporate hand-outs, as well as Halliburton-like sweetheart deals. The federal government must begin to exercise the kind of fiscal responsibility we expect from individuals and families.

Hurricane Katrina revealed that, more than four years after the terrible attacks of September 11, 2001, our nation is not adequately prepared to respond to catastrophic events. We must ensure that our resources are targeted to those regions that are most at risk. I am working on a bipartisan basis with local leaders and emergency responders to improve readiness in the National Capital Region.

Rosa Parks, the brave seamstress who died in October, reminded our nation that one individual with the moral courage to confront injustice can change the course of history. In our great democracy we must all take responsibility for moving our country forward. Together, America can do better.

Sincerely,

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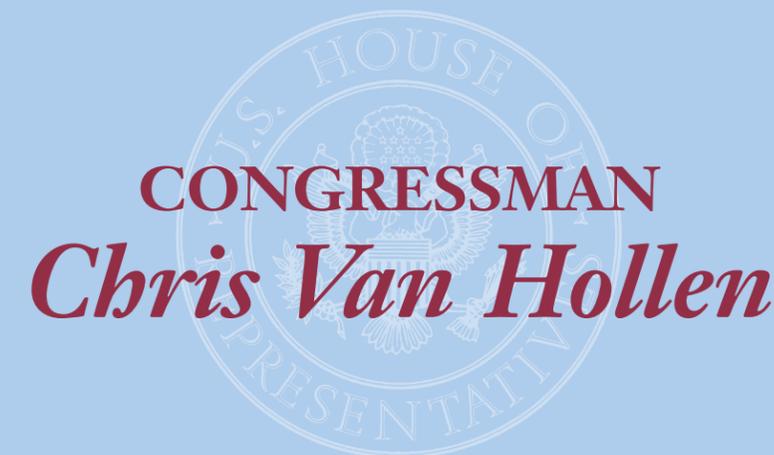


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# A Community Update from



*Congressman Van Hollen meets with residents of Maryland's Eighth Congressional District to discuss important legislative initiatives and the services he and his staff regularly provide to constituents.*

## Maryland's Eighth Congressional District

# Some of Congressman Chris Van Hollen's Legislative Initiatives

## Providing Educational Opportunity for All: Head Start Through College

▲ **Get Smart with Head Start:** Successfully amended legislation to give Head Start centers the flexibility to direct unspent funds towards increasing enrollment in Early Head Start (i.e., children under four years old). Congressman Van Hollen is also the lead sponsor of the legislation to fully fund the Head Start program.



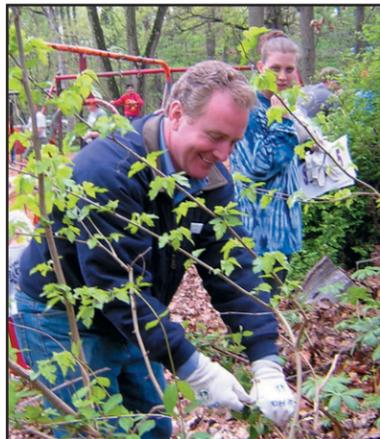
*Congressman Van Hollen speaks with a Takoma Park student about the importance of education.*

▲ **K-12 Commitment:** Wrote the "Keep Our Promise To America's Children and Teachers (PACT) Act" to fully fund the No Child Left Behind initiative and the full federal share of special education programs.

▲ **Expanding Access to College:** Won a critical vote in the Congress to close the so-called 9.5% loophole in the student loan program. That loan scheme allowed certain lenders to pocket huge windfall profits at student and taxpayer expense. This victory frees up billions of dollars to make college more affordable for students.

## Redoubling Our Efforts to Restore the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

▲ **Taking the Bay Program to the Next Level:** As a founding Co-Chairman of the bipartisan Congressional Chesapeake Bay Watershed Task Force, Congressman Van Hollen is working to strengthen and coordinate spending and policy priorities that affect the Chesapeake Bay. He recently co-authored the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Enhancement Act which is designed to bring more resources and more performance-based accountability to the Chesapeake Bay Program.



*Congressman Van Hollen discusses environmental issues and helps with a clean-up of Sligo Creek on Earth Day.*

- ▲ **Focus Anacostia:** Original cosponsor of the Anacostia Watershed Initiative Act which would clean up the Anacostia River Basin. Congressman Van Hollen also secured \$1 million in Low Impact Development funding and \$350,000 for trash reduction to reduce pollution in the Anacostia River watershed.
- ▲ **Mercury Matters:** Forcefully opposed the Bush Administration's irresponsible mercury rule, which would allow up to six times more mercury into the air and Bay than current law permits.
- ▲ **Potomac River Clean-Up:** Secured federal funds to help meet the water quality goals in the Middle Potomac River Watershed. Congressman Van Hollen is Chairman of the Advisory Council for the Trash-Free Potomac Initiative.

## Standing Up for Veterans and Military Retirees

- ▲ **Keep Our Promises to America's Military Retirees Act:** Introduced this legislation to remedy the failure of the federal government to keep its commitment to provide full health care for certain military retirees. This bipartisan bill has the support of a majority in the House of Representatives.
- ▲ **Student Loan Relief:** Co-authored a successful bipartisan amendment to the Higher Education bill to allow active duty military personnel serving in Iraq and Afghanistan to defer repayment of their outstanding student loans.



*Congressman Van Hollen received the George "Buck" Gillispie Award for Meritorious Service from the Blinded American Veterans Foundation (BAVF) for his work in Congress on behalf of American veterans.*

## 21st Century Energy Policy: Strengthening National Security, Fighting Global Warming, Driving Economic Innovation

- ▲ **A New Vision for Energy:** Introduced the New Apollo Energy Act outlining a bold 21st century energy policy grounded in the rapid deployment of clean renewable sources of energy, high-tech efficiency initiatives and millions of homegrown, high-wage jobs.
- ▲ **Tackling Climate Change:** Original cosponsor of the Climate Stewardship Act, a groundbreaking bipartisan effort to fight global warming by establishing a market-based, cap-and-trade system to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

▲ **Leading the Way:** Vice-Chairman of the House Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Caucus, the premier bipartisan coalition advocating for an environmentally responsible energy policy in the U.S. Congress.

## Safeguarding Health and Retirement Security

- ▲ **Keeping the Security in Social Security:** Serves on the House Democratic Social Security Work Group and helped lead the fight against President Bush's risky plan to privatize parts of the Social Security program.
- ▲ **Protecting Medicare and Medicaid:** Opposed cuts to critical health care for seniors and low-income citizens while pressing for lower Medicare prescription drug prices through direct government negotiation with drug companies and legalizing safe and sensible re-importation.



*Congressman Van Hollen delivers a hot meal and discusses legislative issues with a constituent.*

▲ **Covering the Uninsured:** Cosponsored proposal to provide health care coverage to small business employees modeled after the very successful Federal Employees Health Benefits Program.

## Local Initiatives

- ▲ Secured nearly \$2.4 million in federal funding for the Maryland Regional Gang Initiative as part of an ongoing effort to help law enforcement officials deal with the growing level of gang violence in the Washington metropolitan region.
- ▲ Obtained \$500,000 for a Bioscience Education Center at the Germantown campus of Montgomery College. This important project will provide bioscience education opportunities from middle school through post-doctoral work, boosting our region's reputation as an epicenter for biotechnology.
- ▲ Secured tens of millions of dollars for local and regional transportation projects, including funds for roads, transit and the expansion and modernization of the Metro system.